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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on the Guided Reading Procedure (GRP) as a means of improving a literal level skill (unaided recall) and an attitudinal factor (accuracy in comprehension). Also discussed are some features of the GRP which suggest its possible value for fostering such other attitudinal and higher order skills as "recognizing implicit questions," "self-correction," and organization. The GRP, a simple group or individual procedure that can be used from primary school through college, consists of the following steps: An individual or a group is asked to read (or listen to) a selection, the optimal length of which varies with the teaching purpose. Prior to reading, the students are told to read and remember all that they can. After the reading is completed the teacher records the information recalled in whatever fashion it is remembered. The students are then encouraged to recognize incomplete information and other inconsistencies, to go back and review the passage, and to organize remembrances into something resembling an outline. The last two steps are optional and are concerned with medium-term memory (24-48 hours later) and long-term memory. (WR)

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The Guided Reading Procedures
A Strategy for Improving Unaided Recall and for Advancing an Attitude of Comprehension Accuracy

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Prologue: Presented below is a description of the Guided Reading Procedure. Also presented is a brief explanation of some of the thinking which presently is associated with it. The procedure is still under development. It was originally conceived as part of a seven-day strategy to improve study-type reading.*

This paper focuses on the procedure as a means of improving a literal level skill--unaided recall, and an attitudinal factor--accuracy in comprehension. Also discussed are some features of the procedure which suggest its possible value for fostering such other attitudinal and higher order skills as 'recognizing implicit questions', 'self correction', and organization.

Achieving accuracy in reading comprehension is as much a matter of attitude as it is a matter of skill. Achieving accuracy in comprehension means attempting to derive as near the precise message intended by the author as the language will permit. A strategy to improve accuracy in comprehension must have ingredients which teach the student to value accuracy and help him to acquire the subskills necessary to achieve it.

For a time, factors such as accuracy in comprehension and sound recall were perhaps to highly valued and therefore somewhat over-emphasized. In recent years, however, there seems to have been an over-correction which is having negative consequences for some.

*A Seven-Day Strategy To Improve Study-Type Reading. Paper, University of Virginia Second Annual Conference on Secondary Reading. March, 1972.

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Initially the adjustment was intended to play-down "fact orientation" and literal recall and to play-up thinking, discussion and 'valuing'. This made (makes) sense. But only if there is sufficient understanding of the author's message and sufficient recall of detail to make discussion and higher order thinking possible. Currently this fact is being overlooked because the need for such basics is not apparent among middle class children, who are our primary standard for reference. Facts, accurate comprehension, and cogent articulation are factors which are generally so deeply incorporated into the fabric of their lives that many educators now feel these children need a more open-ended school program, stressing expressionistic and visceral communications as a necessary life-balancing experience. For the many others outside of the middle class ethos, however, an emphasis on misty comprehension and impressionistic, though "soulful" communications presents some critical problems: a damaging lack of concern for accuracy in comprehension, resulting in poor recall and an inadequate fund of 'hard' information; all necessary requisites to higher order thinking.

Paradoxically, accuracy, fact acquisition and recall are <u>form</u> and 'soul' is <u>substance</u>. That is, adverse and otherwise "soulful" experiences are the substance of life, but learning to comprehend accurately is a vital part of the process of acquiring the language, the information, and knowledge of conventions which are together necessary to articulate such experiences. In a way, one might say we have a schizoid society. One in which one group has a belly-full of experiences, but little knowledge and capacity to articulate them, and on the other some seemingly privileged children with heads filled

with form and 'knowledge' but somehow muted nonetheless by over-protected, vicariously experienced lives. Thus the Guided Reading Procedure, a seven step procedure, described below is recommended primarily, though not exclusively, for people who have an excess of 'soul', i.e., who have known adversity and have well developed viscera, but who now need 'form'--facts, recall, accuracy, It is also recommended for the many middle class children who may have experienced only the over-correction, and therefore, have never learned the importance of basic facts and accuracy in comprehension.

Below is a partial explanation and rationale for the Guided Reading Procedure. This is followed by a description of the procedure.

Face Validity Only

There have been numerous attempts to isolate the several subskills which are presumed to be involved in reading comprehension. Even in the most notable attempts (Davis, 1944; Hunt, 1957) the conclusions were essentially the same. There are only 3 factors which have been successfully isolated: a general comprehension factor, a specific "reading comprehension" factor, and a vocabulary or word knowledge factor. Sometimes an organizational factor surfaces.

Inspite of the fact that only 3 or 4 factors have been isolated, every teacher knows that there are multiples or subskills and other "substrata" (below the surface) factors (Holmes, 1948) which are prerequisites to the development of the fundamental ability to read and comprehend. One critical reason that it has been so difficult to isolate, or factor identify, these subskills and substrata factors is because their presence is usually no longer

apparent once fundamental reading comprehension skills is acquired. That is, both the subskills and the related substrata factors either evolve into something else, or simply become nested in the larger skill. Because educators are primarily charged with seeing to the development of skills, we must proceed nonetheless to try to improve as many subskills and optimize as many other substrata factors as we believe are vital, even while they have not yet been isolated experimentally.

Subskills Participating in Guided Reading Procedure

In addition to the 3 fundamental skills noted above, the Guided Reading Procedure focuses on 4 subskills or substrata factors: unaided recall, recognizing implicit questions, self-correction and organization.

Of the four subskills, the first, Unaided Recall, is among the most socially prized as an indicator of learning. Unaided Recall is the ability to recall, on the short term, much of what was read without the benefit of questions to aid remembering. This is the kind of recall which is required on the Durrell Analysis of Reading Test: the student reads a brief passage and then tries to remember all he can while the teacher checks the student's remembrance on an detail by detail basis.

'Recognizing Implicit Questions' is the second major skill. There are two realms of recognition for implicit questions; these realms are continuous rather than discrete. That is, implicit questions begin to occur during reading and continue to occur after reading.

'Recognizing Implicit Questions' while reading refers to the ability to recognize inconsistencies in various pieces of information and/or recognizing

flaws in the author's logic, etc. In the second realm, thoughts occurring after reading, the reader realizes that some potentially valuable information was not presented and/or that the information may have been misrepresented or is merely incompatible with other acquired knowledge. To realize these incongruities, or incompletenesses, is to recognize a barrage of unstated, but no less apparent, issues which need resolution. Thus, a proficient reader must note or recognize such inconsistencies while reading, and further continue to realize them in reminiscences after reading. The explicit questions of the teacher raised before and after reading is the device typically used to promote such thinking. There are, however, critical problems with this scheme. Students often never learn to inquire and probe for inconsistencies themselves, and further, rarely learn how to generate their own purposes or questions to guide reading.

Along with unaided recall and recognizing implicit questions, there are the closely related abilities to (3) self-correct and to (4) organize exposition. The third skill, self-correction, is really both a learned propensity and an associated capability, to return to the selection once it has been recognized that there are unanswered questions or apparent errors in recall and to attempt to correct them. This too is basically an attitudinal, as opposed to a cognitive factor. It is through such self-correction that the reader attempts to 'shape' his comprehension into a congruent, organized mass. Thus the 4th skill, organizing, can be viewed as an extension of self-correction, in the sense that the 'shaping' merely continues until information is organized into subordinate and coordinate details around a main area.

On a more complex level, 'organizing' means working with information to create categories which eventually suggest, or lead to discovery of the main idea. In the latter case, organizing becomes a dynamic process analogous to problem-solving. Thus, it is not a thing, such as a penciled outline, but a process by which facts and ideas are manipulated until it becomes possible to recognize an organizational pattern which in turn may reveal the main idea and its supporting details.

At another level, information organized could be condensed under thoughtful pressure for long-term storage so as to be called-up when appropriate. Developing this "study" skill of remembering on the long term can be done in several ways; see the X-Change Annotation Writing System, (Manzo, 1971) and the SQ3R Technique, (Robinson, 1962).

Together, then, the four factors of unaided recall, recognizing implicit questions, self-correction, and organizing are believed to be essential to advancing an attitude of comprehension accuracy and thereby to improving overall reading comprehension. Thus, the Guided Reading Procedure was developed to improve these factors.

The Guided Reading Procedure (GRP)

The Guided Reading Procedure is a relatively simple group (preferably) or individual instructional procedure. A group--almost any age, any level from primary school through college--is asked to read (or listen to) a selection. The optional length for a selection should vary with teaching purpose. As a rule of thumb, length is best judged by the number of words which can be read by an average reader from that group in times varying from 3 minutes for primary students (or 90 words) to 5 minutes for intermediates (or approximately, 500 words), 7 minutes for junior high school (approximately 900 words),

10 minutes for senior high (2,000 words), and 12 minutes for college students (2,500 words). Estimates are given in time because it is easier to estimate how long attention can be maintained in time than in numbers of words.

After briefly establishing appropriate readiness and setting a purpose for reading--try The ReQuest Procedure (Manzo, 1969) if it is a particularly difficult selection--the student is told to read and remember all than he can. That is Step I. As each member of the group finishes reading, they turn the selection face down. On the chalkboard, the teacher then records the information recalled in whatever fashion it is remembered. This is Step II. The teacher should record responses in an abbreviated form to avoid extensive writing with his back to the class. Typically, students will make few statements on first invitation to recall what they have read. After a few minutes, reflection, associations, hook-ups and corrections of one another's labored recalls will begin to occur. This often results in a spiralling effect which often draws in even the most reticent of students. Another reason students will sometimes not initially respond is because they have not yet become convinced that the charge to recall all is a serious one. The teacher can usually get students to attempt full recall by stressing its importance before reading and by waiting patiently for responses after reading.

When the students have said (recalled) all that they can, they will recognize that there is much which they did not remember and/or is incorrectly represented. Thus, there will be certain inconsistencies which will be implicit, and awareness of certain incomplete informational matters which require correction. To encourage recognition of these, the class is then permitted to go back and review the article, correct inconsistencies, and to add further information they deem necessary. This is Step III.

In Step IV, the class attempts to organize remembrances into something resembling an outline. The outline can be as simple or elaborate as age and grade level permits. The teacher may ask non-specific guiding questions at this point, such as "What is the main idea?" or "What are some of the major details?"--working, as it were, toward the main idea.

Step V. The teacher raises such specific questions as she feels are necessary for fullest understanding. Questions should require synthesis of the new information with information and learnings previously covered. After several repetitions, this last step can be modified to where the teacher asks non-specific questions such as "How does this relate to what we have studied last week?" or, in a slightly more specific way, "Do you see any questions which could be asked about how this relates to the article 'Man and the Moon' we read last week?" In early efforts to familiarize students with the technique, it is probably best to ask specific questions. These questions will not only help the student to reach the understanding of the selection, but also provide subtle feedback to the student about the ideas and information which the teacher thought important. The teacher must, however, be certain to ask only those questions which are vital, rather than the full barrage of questions which usually occur.

Steps VI and VII, described below, may be deleted on an given day, but should be part of long term planning to derive the fullest benefits of the procedure. Step VI is designed to reinforce the exceptional efforts in accuracy and recall which the student is required to make. Short term memory may be checked with a conventional test--matching multiple choice, fill-in, essays,

or by something quasi-conventional like an unaided recall test. Medium range memory of the selection may be again checked within 48 hours with either a conventional or unaided recall test. Scores are charted overtime by the students. Regular grades may be based on such scores, but only if questions are added which require application, and therefore, evidence of conceptualization, as well as literal recall.

The total effect of the Guided Reading Procedure to this point is to teach students how to recall, self-correct, comprehend, organize and relate what is read to previous experience and learning. The Procedure can also be elaborated into a seventh (7), 'study', step. The organizational phase is merely extended to include breaking the information down into questions and answers on a divided page. These notes are then studied, as in the Question, Read, Respond (aloud) method (Robinson, 1962). To reinforce such study, long term recall (2 weeks or more) should again be checked either through questions or unaided recall.

Precis of GRP

After appropriate readiness and content purpose setting...

(1) Set major functional reading purpose: "Read, to recall all"

(2) Teacher records unaided recalls on chalkboard.

(3) Class studies recorded remembrance to find inconsistencies and missing information.

(4) Class re-reads with individuals answering whatever implicit questions are apparent.

(5) A simple or complex outline is constructed: at least main idea and supporting details.

(6) Optional: Medium term memory (24-48 hours later) is tested with conventional instrument or unaided recall.

(7) Optional: a) reorganize outline into Question-Read-Respond notes to be studied; b) test long term memory (2 weeks or more) with conventional tests or by an unaided recall test.

Charts comparing percentages of accuracy of recall can be kept of short term (immediately after reading), medium term (24-48 hours later) and long term (after 2 weeks) memory and comprehension. Test questions should properly reflect the level of analysis reached in discussions following the reading-recall period; any inferences and insights reached in discussion should also be remembered. Questions requiring abstraction from and/or application of the new information may also occur in long term testing. These questions, however, should be separately labeled as "thought" or "discussion" questions and not be confused with questions which merely require recall.

Summary

The Guided Reading Program is recommended as a strategy for improving overall reading comprehension. It stresses an important attitudinal factor - accuracy in reading comprehension, and a key skill factor - unaided recall. Such other skills and attitudinal factors as 'seeing implicit questions', 'self-correction' and organizing information are also shown to benefit.

The purposes of the procedure are viewed as being particularly useful for students who have not absorbed the skills and attitudinal factors noted above as part of their normal cultural heritage, and for the many middle class children whose school program may have inappropriately played-down these skills and attitudinal factors.

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